

II. REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,377,860 to Gray et al. (“Gray”).

In response, applicants have amended Claim 1 to recite a peer-to-peer network. Claim 1 has been further amended to include the step of defining at least one of input, output and operational characteristics of components of the vehicle network based on user input. In addition, the “storing compiled data step” of claim 1 has been amended to recite storing the compiled data in at least one network node of the vehicle network, wherein the components function in accordance with the defined characteristics and relationships.

A claim is anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 “only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.” *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Applicants submit that Claim 1, as amended, is patently distinct from the Gray reference. Firstly, Gray discloses a hierarchical network wherein a vehicle control center serves as a master to a bus (see Gray col. 3, lines 31-32). In contrast, the network of applicants’ claimed invention is a decentralized peer-to-peer network, which differs considerably from the network of Gray in both structure and function, since applicant’s network has no master in control of the bus.

In addition, the system disclosed by Gray teaches a device interface, which defines only how a user interacts with the device (see Gray col. 4, lines 57-65; Figs. 6B and 7). No provision is made to configure the operational characteristics of devices connected to the bus, as these are fixed by the manufacturers of the devices and cannot be altered. Changes are limited to customizing the interface with alternate interface arrangements, which are also fixed (see Gray col. 7, lines 13-28). In contrast, the method of amended Claim 1 provides the step of defining at least one of input, output and operational characteristics of components of the vehicle network based on user input, allowing not only the user interface with the components to be configured, but also the operational characteristics of the components as well.

Claim 1 has also been amended to recite storing compiled data in at least one network node of the vehicle network, wherein the components function in accordance with the defined characteristics and relationships. In contrast, the data of the system disclosed by Gray (which is limited to interface data as detailed above) resides in the vehicle control center (see Gray col. 4, lines 11-18) due to the significant differences in both structure and function between the hierarchical network of Gray (see Gray col. 3, lines 31-32) and applicants' peer-to-peer decentralized network.

Based on the foregoing, applicants submit that amended Claim 1 is not anticipated by the cited reference and is thus now allowable. Claims 2 through 10 depend ultimately from Claim 1 and each add limitations that further distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. As such, applicants submit that Claims 2 through 10 are also allowable.

Independent Claim 11 has been amended in the same manner as Claim 1. Applicants submit that amended Claim 11 is now allowable for the same reasons as discussed above for Claim 1. Claims 12 through 20 depend ultimately from Claim 11 and each add limitations that further distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. As such, applicants submit that Claims 12 through 20 are also allowable.

Independent Claim 21 has been amended in the same manner as Claim 1. Applicants submit that amended Claim 21 is now allowable for the same reasons as discussed above for Claim 1. Claims 22 through 30 depend ultimately from Claim 21 and each add limitations that further distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. As such, applicants submit that Claims 22 through 30 are also allowable.

Independent Claim 31 has been amended in the same manner as Claim 1. Applicants submit that amended Claim 31 is now allowable for the same reasons as discussed above for Claim 1.

III. CONCLUSION

It is noted that the examiner has cited but not applied U.S. Pat. App. Pub. No. 2002/0126876 against applicants' claimed invention. Apparently, the examiner has concluded that the unasserted art, whether considered in part or in combination, neither anticipates nor renders obvious applicants' claimed invention.

For the reasons discussed above, applicants submit that amended Claims 1-31 of the pending application are patentable over all the prior art of record. It is believed that the application is now in form for allowance and favorable action by the examiner is requested. The examiner is requested to contact applicants' representative at the telephone number below if any other issues remain.

Respectfully Submitted,

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